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TRIP TO THE LOWER COLORADO RIVER

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Price Williams

Trip to the Lower Colorado River . . .

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The First Landing
On the Hardy

The Volcanoes
Cocopahs

Meal Time
Sierra Myor

A Trip

TO THE

Lower Colorado River

Mr. William W. Price will conduct a party of boys and young men on a Natural History and Exploring trip during the Christmas holidays to the Lower Colorado River, from Yuma, Arizona, southward through Mexico to the Gulf of California. The party will leave Yuma, Dec. 21, and will return to Yuma, Jan. 5.

The itinerary of the trip, based on the experience of last year, will probably be as follows: Dec. 21-23, on the river, camping and hunting at suitable places en route. Dec. 23-27, in camp at *Boca de Hardy* at tide water, hunting wild hogs, deer and water fowl, possible trips to the oyster-beds in the Gulf, and to the Sierra Pinto, where antelope abound. Dec. 27-30, up "Hardy Colorado" to the Volcanoes. Dec. 30-Jan. 3, exploring the Volcanoes and Volcano Lake, where there is probably better wild-fowl shooting than anywhere else on the river. Jan. 3-5, return to Yuma from the Volcanoes, by wagon, sixty miles.

This expedition will furnish unique experiences for those not acquainted with the strange topography, the plant and animal life of our southwest-

ern deserts. The trip will be highly educational and at the same time will furnish unusual opportunities for sport. Repetition of the disappointing features of the expedition from the Thacher School last Christmas will be avoided as far as possible. Then, we were very much handicapped by heavy boats, which we found almost impossible to row against the current or to carry to sloughs or lagoons adjoining the river. This year 16-foot folding canvas boats will be used. These weigh but 70 pounds, and one used the past summer on a 75-mile trip about Lake Tahoe, in heavy winds and waves and on numerous portages, proved entirely satisfactory.

The trip is neither hard nor dangerous, as hunting trips go, but it must be realized that after leaving Yuma, we are in the midst of a vast desert, and that no white men live beyond the border. The rowing on the river is done in half-hour shifts, and with light boats this is not burdensome.

Membership, $50.00, This includes the hotel expense at Yuma, and all expense for boats, guides, and living while on the river.

For particulars, railroad rates, maps of the region, etc., address,

WILLIAM W. PRICE, M. A.,
Agassiz Hall, Alta, California.

REFERENCES

President David Starr Jordan, Stanford University, Cal.
Mr. Sherman D. Thacher Nordhoff, "
Professor Charles H. Gilbert Stanford University "
Professor John C. Branner " " "
Professor William E. Ritter Berkeley "
Mr. Warren Olney, San Francisco "
Rev. J. K. McLean, D. D. Oakland "

MEMBERS OF THE PARTY IN 1899

Mr. William W. Price Alta, Calif.
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Mr. Burleigh Putnam, 4503 Forestville Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Mr. Henry Stephens, 1271 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Mich.
Mr. Townsend Vail Santa Barbara, Calif.

EXTRACTS FROM A NOTE BOOK

Dec. 16. "We left Yuma in three boats, seventeen in the party, including our four Indian guides. * * * * Below Yuma the river takes a straight course westward for some five miles, when it swerves to the southeast from the desert sandhills at Pilot Knob, and passes into a broad bottomland, a jungle of willow, cottonwood, tule, cane, and wild hemp, which reaches to the water's edge. * * * * We passed the iron monument on the line between Mexico and California, and camped on the Arizona shore some twenty miles below Yuma.

Dec. 17. "All day we have been rowing down the river. We passed the Arizona line about ten o'clock and are now in Mexico. * * * * The monotony of the green river banks is now and then enlivened by groves of cottonwoods in golden foliage, or the yellow-brown of the tule patches, already touched by the frosts. * * * * This is a strange region. No sign of human life anywhere along the banks, but water-fowl abound, and great fish splash the placid surface of the stream. * * * * Toward evening we passed sandhills on the Sonora side. Here the river makes a great bend to the east, cutting into the desert mesa. * * * * Today we shot ducks and pelicans, and saw deer tracks on the sandbars. Our camp is on a little shelf of land at the edge of the jungle.

Dec. 18. "This evening an Indian rode up to our camp. He had heard our shooting from his village six miles away. He talked with our guides a time and then disappeared in the wilderness. Strange creatures, these Cocopahs! * * * * Shot at a coyote on the bank, but did not get it. Tomorrow our guides say we shall reach the "Hardy", a sluggish branch of the Colorado which comes in from the northwest, and which is formed by the hot springs at the Volcanoes,and marshy streams from the Colorado. It is a famous region for fish and game.

Dec. 19. "The Colorado is a mile wide here at the junction of the two rivers, and the tide is noticeable even now. At the full and new moon the bore, a great tidal wave, comes rolling in from the Gulf, to * * * We made camp after night; miserable work it was. We came struggling in one after another, over the sandbars, grounding many times; the guides got into the water and shoved us off. Great flocks of pelicans arose with deafening roar from their roosting places in the shallow water. * * * * A great fire of driftwood and the smell of supper soon bring contentment to the most weary traveler.

Dec. 20. "By daylight most of the boys were hunting, and the reports of shotguns gave promise of good things for dinner. * * * * Our head guide went for mullet, an excellent sea fish that cannot be caught with hook and line, and which it is customary to kill with dynamite. A few shots of the powder furnished an abundance. Mullet baked in the ashes is a dish equaled only by mountain brook trout broiled on a hot rock. * * * * Farnam shot a deer today.

Dec. 21. "Thirteen deer and one wild-hog were seen in the hemp and tules on the point between the Hardy and the Colorado, but none were shot. * * * * In the shallow lagoon a half mile from camp are myriads of snipe, ibis, avocets, stilts, godwits, and curlews; over sixty were shot today. Some are dripping with fat, and these the Cocopah guides prefer to ducks.

Dec. 22. "The Indians set fire to the tules to drive out the deer and hogs. The smoke was intensely black, but the fires died out so rapidly that one could walk over a burned area a few minutes after the fire had passed. The hogs congregate in the few patches that are left unburned, and here it is easy to find them.

Dec. 23. "Farnam and Morris each killed a hog, and Putnam shot two deer with his "Savage" carbine. * * * * Tomorrow we shall begin our trip up the Hardy.

Dec. 24. "We have a delightful camp tonight on the left bank of the river. Plenty of dry grass for beds and much drift for fires. * * * * Putnam's two deer are being skinned, and Charley is cooking a good dinner of fish, venison and ducks. * * * * Antonio suggests calling this place Campo de la Noche Buena, for this is Christmas eve * * * * A huge fish of the minnow family, called here the Colorado Salmon, is abundant in the Hardy. Vail caught several from the shore with a hand line. One weighed over fifteen pounds. The flesh is white and good to eat. The boys are roasting choice morsels of venison in the camp fire. Meat never tastes so good as when cooked this way.

Dec. 25. "We camped early to cook our Christmas dinner. The Christmas box, brought all the way from San Francisco, was opened. The cooks had done their best. We gathered about a piece of canvas spread on the ground—our Indians too, for this was Christmas—and had fish, venison, ducks, snipe, baked beans fruit cake, plum pudding, cranberry sauce, cheese, chocolate, candy and nuts. * * * * Ducks are becoming more abundant as we ascend the Hardy. Many beautiful white cranes are seen flying, toward the Volcano Lake, our guides say. * * * * Putnam caught a salmon weighing fully twenty-five pounds. We hear them splashing continually.

Dec. 26. "We had hard work today getting our boats past the "rapids"; in some places we tied the three boats together and dragged them along with a long rope. * * * * Ducks and geese numerous. * * * * Two of the party went to a cattle ranch near Sierra Myor to get wagons to take us to Yuma.

Dec. 27. "The wagons overtook us early this morning. We bade our Indians farewell; they will take our boats back to Yuma, a fortnight's task, while we shall go directly to Yuma by wagon. * * * * We had a hard road today, and much walking to do. * * * * Myriads of water-fowl in the lagoons—Bodman killed seven canvasback at one shot. * * * * We bought watermelons of the Indians, and

took many snap shots, but the Cocopahs, like most Indians, do not like to be photographed.

Dec. 28. "We camped last night at Poso Vicente, a slough swarming with ducks. * * * * An old Indian woman had been burned in her tule hut and her funeral was in progress. A dozen women mourners all night kept up a wail. The body was to be burned in the morning. * * * * We passed the Volcanoes at noon; a wonderful place! Full of rumblings, overpowering sulphur stench, bursts of steam, showers of scalding mud, lakes of boiling mud, ink black pools—sulphur, soda, alum, everywhere.

Dec. 29. We reached Beltran's ranch last night. * * * * All day we have traveled the desert near the edge of the bottomlands; mesquite and creosote are the chief bushes. * * * * Tonight we camped on the Paderone, one of the several streams which leave the Colorado near the Border and follow a swampy course to the Volcano Lake region. * * * * Coyotes entered our camp close to the campfire.

Dec. 30. "A monotonous ride today through desert sand and scanty vegetation. * * * * Camped near the line. Tomorrow we shall reach Yuma.

A Spike Buck
Nearing Sierra Myor

Fire in Tules
Cocopah Granary

A Morning's Bag
Christmas Camp